



Beat the Winter Blues and Get Outdoors!

You may have heard of the federal “No Child Left Behind” program, but have you heard of all the “No Child Left Indoors” initiatives many states are promoting?

Across the country, groups of people enlightened and inspired by Richard Louv’s 2005 book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder* have launched various initiatives to get kids outdoors - learning in and about nature.

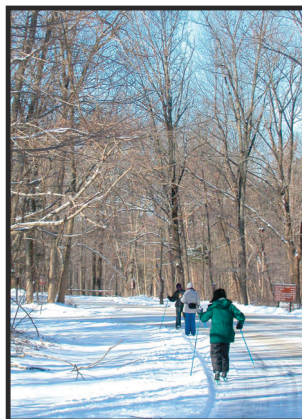
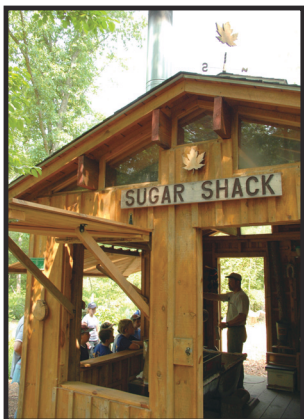
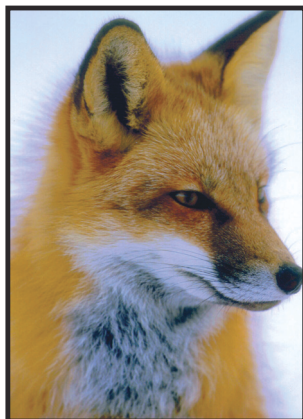
Louv’s book explores the links between the increased time kids spend indoors “plugged in” to computer games with the increased levels of childhood obesity and conditions such as Attention Deficit Disorder. He and other around the country are highlighting the positive role outdoor experiences play in the development of an all-around healthy child.

In March 2006, Connecticut launched the *No Child Left Inside* program, a major state initiative designed to reconnect youngsters and their families with the outdoors - using Connecticut’s state parks and forests. In January 2007, the U.S. Forest Service launched a pilot program, *More Kids In the Woods*, which will fund local efforts to get children outdoors.

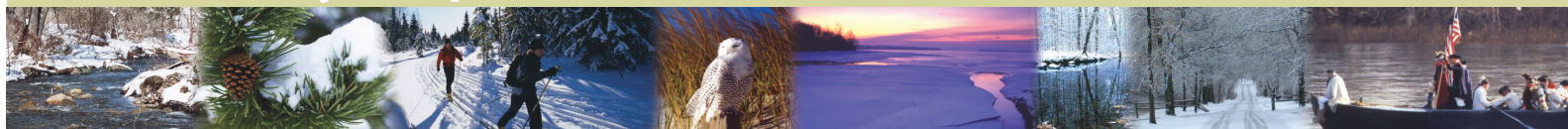
In New Jersey

Many of New Jersey’s state parks, forests, and historic sites offer wonderful opportunities for students to “Unplug!” and leave computers, TVs, and video games indoors and “reconnect” to the real thing, even in winter!

- At Kittatinny Valley State Park in Andover, you can practice your hooting skills during a night-time “owl prowl,” discover nature at the heart of popular holiday traditions, or warm up with a sweet treat during the Annual Hot Chocolate Hike.



Winter is a good time to spot a red fox at Island Beach State Park, participate in maple sugaring at the Forest Resource Education Center, and do some cross-country skiing at one of New Jersey’s many state parks.



Beat the Winter Blues and Get Outdoors! *(cont.)*

- At Island Beach State Park, you can take a walk on the Fisherman's Walkway boardwalk, Reed's Road trail, Johnny Allen Cove trail, or the Spizzle Creek bird blind trail. Winter is a quiet, peaceful time in the park. Try to spot a fox, mink or the snowy owl that occasionally visits.
- At the Forest Resource Education Center in Jackson, in late February when the icicles start to melt and maple sugaring season begins, buckets are hung on maple trees to collect the sap that slowly drip drops from the spout. The foresters gather and boil down the sap into fresh maple syrup in the sugar shack. Students can taste this delicious forest product when they participate in interpretive programs during their visit.
- You can stroll along the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway in Liberty State Park in Jersey City and look for numerous species of waterfowl that spend the winter there.
- Experience winter camping, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing on the towpath at Voorhees State Park, or ice fishing, cross-country skiing, sledding, birding and hiking at Round Valley Recreation Area, both in Hunterdon County.
- At Wharton State Forest in Hammonton, winter is a great time to explore hiking, all-terrain biking and horseback riding trails virtually free of ticks and bugs, visit the historic villages of Batsto and Atsion, and be on the lookout for those winter visitors like red-breasted nuthatch, bufflehead and tundra swan.
- Winter weather doesn't stop the interpretive programs at our parks and historic sites. Get in touch with the past by enjoying house tours, hands-on toys and puzzles from the era, "Cider Sundays" and five special events from now until March at the Johnson Ferry House in Washington Crossing State Park, Titusville.
- At Monmouth Battlefield State Park in Manalapan, you can hike through fields and orchards where soldiers fought and died in a Revolutionary War Battle more than 230 years ago. You can also learn how soldiers loaded muskets in the 1770s and participate in a wooden musket drill.

For more information about educational programs at New Jersey's state parks, forests and historic sites, contact the Division of Parks and Forestry and request the "Teachers Guide to Education Programs in New Jersey's State Parks, Forests and Historic Sites."

For a complete listing of hundreds of cultural and recreational activities for all ages, pick up the free Fall & Winter Calendar of Events available at any New Jersey state park, forest or historic site or visit

www.njparksandforests.com.